



Infrastructure & Commercial Development

Howard County is well positioned from both an infrastructure and commercial development perspective to handle the requirements of Fort Meade Growth. Taking the highest projection of growth into consideration, the Infrastructure and Commercial Development Committee looked at the impacts and opportunities of Fort Meade Growth against the Howard County General Plan.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Findings

The Committee examined the water supply system, wastewater treatment system, storm water management, solid waste programs, utilities, and technology. The following are preliminary findings:

- **Water and Waste Water:** Planned capacity ample to support Water & Sewer Master Plan growth through 2030.
- **Storm Water:** Current regulations adequate to provide storm water management for new development.
- **Solid Waste:** Existing arrangement expires in 2012.
- **Energy:** Facilities are adequate to handle Fort Meade Growth in Howard County.
- **Telecommunications:** Facilities are adequate for anticipated growth.

Actions/Next Steps

Based on the above findings, it is recommended that the County consider future action to: continue to track usage rates for water and waste water treatment; ensure that planned capacity additions are brought online as scheduled; implement scheduled inspection and maintenance programs to ensure integrity of systems; begin to explore new arrangements for solid waste disposal.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Findings

The Committee analyzed the Land Use Planning and Zoning, Route 1 Corridor Revitalization, Environmental Impact and Business needs. BGE representatives analyzed the electric power distribution systems. The following are preliminary findings:

- **Existing Inventory:** Howard County has over 64,000,000 square feet of existing Commercial Real Estate and the potential capacity of another 35,680,000 square feet.
- **Gross Absorption:** Commercial real estate absorption in Howard County averages 1,394,707 square feet annually.
- **BRAC Impact:** As high as 1,072,000 SF over five years, working out to 214,400 square feet per year. Equals about 1-½ % of our current real estate inventory and 15% of annual absorption.

Actions/Next Steps

Based on the above findings, it is recommended that the County consider future action to: build on County reputation as a great place to do business; continue to encourage re-development in the Route 1 corridor; track inventory, absorption and employment trends in key product and geographic segments of the County office submarket; consider long-term growth in the next general plan revision cycle; ensure that transportation systems and infrastructure continue to support key employment centers.

The projected growth also presents an opportunity for redevelopment of parcels to improve storm water and water quality per existing regulations. In addition, with a landfill disposal contract set to expire in 2012, the County can take the lead in encouraging regional and State collaboration to explore “waste-to-energy” strategies.



Health and Human Services

Howard County finds itself at a critical juncture in terms of its capacity to provide health and human services, which will be exacerbated by the impending growth at Fort Meade. The Health and Human Services (HHS) Committee examined the impacts and opportunities associated with BRAC within the framework of the County's Human Service Master Plan (HSMP). Data was acquired from: Howard County General Hospital, Howard County Health Department, Howard County Child Care Resource Center, Maryland Committee for Children/LOCATE (MSDE), Recreation & Parks, Columbia Association, Howard County Office on Aging, and the Maryland Department of Health & Mental Health.

Findings / Opportunities

Based on its analysis, the HHS Committee found that:

- Howard County's HHS delivery system is already at capacity in some areas.
 - A variety of factors are contributing to workforce shortages, which create longer waiting times for services.
 - Growing human service needs are putting a strain on funding.
- Health and human services need to be considered as an integral part of County and regional planning efforts.
 - The delivery of quality health and human services is closely linked to workforce development, housing and transportation issues within Howard County.
 - Regional competition for workers and the availability of transportation in and out of the county impact the ability of service providers to recruit and retain staff.
- Higher income BRAC families will likely exacerbate the County's affordability issues. This will create increased stress on economically disadvantaged families.

The impetus of increased growth due to BRAC provides an opportunity to look for innovative ways to leverage current resources, increase collaboration with other service areas, and examine the long-term health of the human service sector.

Actions / Next Steps

When the grant funding from the Office of Economic Adjustment becomes available, the Department of Citizen Services will:

- **Hire a Planner** to address the above findings and integrate plans to prepare for the incoming BRAC families with the work of the HSMP.
- **Contract with needs assessment consultants** to take a closer look at capacity with a focus on services for children, seniors, and mental health.

In addition, the HHS Committee recommends the County undertake the following:

- **Re-examine the impact of county policies** on the human service needs of County residents (especially those who are economically disadvantaged) and the capacity of service providers to meet the needs of incoming families as well as current residents.
- **Conduct a salary survey** of county, state, and nonprofit employees in Howard County to inform analysis and discussion of the future health of the human service sector.



Workforce Development

The Workforce Development Committee identified a significant workforce shortage. The Committee analyzed State labor reports, reviewed surveys of current Howard County businesses, studied figures related to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) enrollments and instructional capacity in order to understand how the future impacts and opportunities of Fort Meade Growth will influence gaps in the regional workforce.

Findings

From analysis to date, the Committee has determined the following:

1. Overall job growth throughout the region will be 425,000 from 2005 – 2020. While BRAC accounts for only 10% of the regional job growth, it is compounding the current lack of specific types of workers in a competitive workforce.
2. Three main factors contribute to a regional workforce shortage: (a) Baby Boomer retirements; (b) Low enrollment in STEM; and (c) Lack of security cleared individuals.
3. Any plan to address the impending worker shortage must take into account the following workplace realities:
 - Approximately 50 – 70% of BRAC jobs will come unfilled and the largest percentage of jobs requires technical certifications and degrees.
 - About 100,000 residents commute to jobs outside Howard County (15,000 of those currently work at Ft. Meade).
 - Companies are often unable to find the workers they need locally and are recruiting outside of the region.
 - In-county undergraduate programs are available only at HCC, University of Phoenix, and some at UMUC.

Actions / Next Steps

The Committee is developing a four-part program:

Workforce Awareness Campaign. Provide regular information to members of the workforce to assist employers and workers in achieving best matches: (1) Inform employers and job seekers on WDS capabilities; (2) Support recruitment of potential interns and candidates for existing jobs; (3) Develop training/workshops to inform workforce about the clearance process; (4) Create a Spouse Employment Assistance Network (SEAN) in the Columbia Workforce Center; (5) Use Fort Meade Coordination Zone to promote regional solutions for workforce.

HCPSS Integration. Generate additional focus at HCPSS level: (1) Integrate career pathway information beginning as early as grades 4-8; (2) Stimulate interest in the STEM areas among K-12 students; (3) Streamline articulation of programs between HCPSS and post secondary institutions.

Funding. Advocate for more state and federal training/retraining funding.

Cooperative Efforts. Work with other institutions in two key areas: (1) Expand / broaden the post secondary educational opportunities at the Laurel Higher Education Center and other cooperative higher education initiatives such as HCC partnership with Excelsior; (2) Use network of retired professionals and relocating spouses to help fill the workforce and teacher shortfalls.



Education

While the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) must refine particular programs to accommodate incoming families, it is well positioned to handle Fort Meade Growth within the context of its master plan. Most importantly, highly skilled positions will compose much of the projected growth and compound the need to focus attention on workforce development.

Findings

While the overall impact of Fort Meade Growth on HCPSS appears marginal, there are still several areas that will require additional attention:

- ***Enhanced Career and Technology Education (CTE)*** – Job growth is expected in more technical areas.
- ***Incongruity of School Programs*** – There are disparate requirements from one school system to another and from one state to another. There is a need to improve transfer procedures and a need for transition services for uprooted students.
- ***Need for Highly Qualified Teachers*** – HCPSS must generate a new core of teachers to maintain its high standards.
- ***Shortfall in Information Availability*** – Make school requirements, expectations, and programs accessible to relocating families.

Actions

The projected growth falls within existing and planned capacity with moderate redistricting as necessary. The following is recommended:

- ***Address New Workforce Demands*** - Collaborate with Howard Community College and the County Work Force Development Office to develop high-quality CTE feeder programs (K-20).
- ***Create Transition Supports*** - Develop welcome materials for human resource staff at Ft. Meade, conduct transition activities to evaluate academic credit and emotional support, and develop plan and metrics to demonstrate HCPSS support of parental participation.
- ***Develop Information Campaign and Individual Tracking System*** – Disseminate information to new families and track how parents and students use HCPSS resources.

Next Steps

The Education Committee intends to refine its assessments to identify where HCPSS will feel the impact of growth. The following will aid development of action plans to capitalize on opportunities and mitigation plans to minimize impacts:

- Make an accurate count of the number of additional school age children and where they are likely to attend school.
- Work with the county's local education agencies to assess capital spending plans and the projected shortfall of teachers, classrooms, and schools.
- Coordinate with federal agencies, state agencies, and regional neighbors.



Public Safety

The Public Safety Committee is in the process of examining the effects of regional growth and BRAC on local disaster preparedness, emergency room capacity, and the response readiness of police, fire, and rescue.

Findings

The Public Safety Committee recognizes that regional and County growth – combined with changes in the security profile of the region – require a re-examination of preparedness at all levels. Further analysis will be required to identify specific gaps or shortfalls for police and emergency services in the areas of organizational capability, communications and emergency management technology, training and capital resources.

Actions

The Committee will define and address issues in four areas:

- ***Regional and Local Disaster Planning and Preparedness*** – What range of emergencies should the public safety sector be prepared to address?
- ***Staffing and Response Times*** – How should the Department of Fire & Rescue (DFRS) and Police Department (PD) grow and/or restructure to handle new demands. The DFRS will consider, for example: new fire stations, increased engine staffing, public education initiatives. The PD will consider: additional patrol officers, a new police district, beat reconfigurations.
- ***Emergency Medical Care*** – How should Howard County work with regional stakeholders to most effectively manage emergency room capacity, hospital surge, and EMS assets?
- ***Integrate Baltimore Region with the National Capital Region*** – Should the Region be elevated from Tier II to Tier I by combining the Baltimore Region with the National Capital Region for emergency management purposes?

Next Steps

In moving forward, a paramount goal is to establish a strong working relationship with Anne Arundel County and with Fort Meade and its constituents. Accordingly, the Committee will develop a work plan to explore the issues identified above in depth, and will identify any federal grant money that might facilitate its action program.



Transportation

The projected growth at Fort Meade represents a tremendous impact on the efficiency of local and regional transportation networks.

Findings

Howard County Staff has worked closely with the State Highway Administration (SHA), Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), and Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) during the past two years to determine how best to apply limited transportation funds. The bottom line is that many critical highway segments in Howard County are either failing or close to failing during peak periods. Key highways serving Fort Meade are especially sensitive to any additional traffic volume. This applies in particular to the MD-175 corridor from I-95 to Fort Meade, but also to regional and county feeder routes that support Fort Meade. Key highway projects planned in the Fort Meade area are unlikely to be completed during the time frame leading up to BRAC. Accordingly, the Committee has determined that other initiatives to satisfy or limit demand will also be required.

Actions

The identified upgrades and initiatives are crucial for accommodating growth and supporting a smoothly operating transportation system.

Highways

- **US-1/MD-175.** Construct US 1/MD 175 Interchange.
- **MD-175.** Widen MD 175 between US1 and MD295.
- **I-95.** Widen I-95 by adding two HOV lanes.
- **US-1.** Expedite improvements along US1.

Rail Service

- **MARC.** Improve the frequency, reliability and scope of MARC service.
- **Green Line.** Continue evaluating options to extend the Washington Metro Green Line.

Bus Service

- **Routes.** Restructure and expand local and regional bus services, including express routes with strategically located park and ride lots to serve as focal points for express bus service.
- **Incentives.** Create fare incentives to improve ridership and Ft. Meade parking disincentives.
- **TOF.** Develop a joint use Transit Operations Facility (TOF) at Fort Meade.

Funding

- **TTF.** Support proposals to expand funding to Maryland's Transportation Trust Fund
- **Regional Plan.** Support the 2007 Baltimore Regional Transportation Plan.

Next Steps

The Office of Economic Adjustment in the Department of Defense has awarded the Fort Meade Region a grant to evaluate anticipated travel demands. Once the study is complete the following will occur:

- **Set Priorities** – Establish ranking for transportation improvements.
- **Technical Studies** - Coordinate appropriate agencies (DPZ, DPW, SHA, MTA, BMC, etc.) to conduct technical studies to determine project feasibility and effectiveness.
- **Funding** - Lobby for funding to implement the most feasible and cost effective strategies.



Housing

Howard County is well positioned to meet projected demand for market rate housing associated with Fort Meade growth. Additional steps will be necessary to address the housing needs of lower wage workers holding service jobs associated with Fort Meade growth.

Findings

The Housing Committee evaluated the potential for resale of existing housing units, construction of new housing units and government sponsored housing programs available to accommodate the Howard County housing needs associated with Fort Meade growth. While not unanimous, it is the majority opinion of the Housing Committee that the growth associated with Fort Meade does not augment planned growth and therefore is accounted for in existing household growth projections. The following are preliminary findings:

- ***Housing Demand from Fort Meade Growth:*** Fort Meade growth will generate between 2,300 and 2,800 Howard County households by 2015. These households represent between 8.8% and 10.7% of total projected growth in the county during the Fort Meade growth years.
- ***Resale of Existing Housing Units:*** 26,844 existing housing units are expected to be resold during the Fort Meade growth years.
- ***Construction of New Housing Units:*** 10,762 new housing units are in the development review process.
- ***Howard County MIHUs:*** 1,661 MIHUs (Moderate Income Housing Units) are in the development review process.
- ***Jobs/Housing Ratio:*** Fort Meade growth will not distort Howard County's historic jobs to houses ratio of 1.4 jobs per household.
- ***Affordability:*** All of the 389 Howard County households filling jobs indirectly created or induced by Fort Meade growth will earn incomes that qualify for the MIHU program.
- ***Housing Gap:*** 114 Fort Meade growth households will earn incomes below \$35,250 and would therefore only qualify for a one bedroom MIHU. This is an MIHU housing type that is not represented in the development pipeline in numbers sufficient to meet demand due to Fort Meade growth.

Actions/Next Steps

Based on the above findings, it is recommended that Howard County take future action to: 1) ensure that sufficient MIHU units are built coincident with the job growth which is projected to take place between 2012 and 2015; 2) establish rental housing assistance programs or adjust MIHU units in the development pipeline to match housing type with household incomes of induced and indirect job holders; 3) consider the creation of a revolving loan fund to buy down home purchase prices for lower income households; 4) monitor the actual income and geographic distribution of Fort Meade growth households throughout the region to verify current assumptions.